



## GSA – REGION 6

Date: 02/18/2005

### Appliances in the Workplace Facilities Branch Guidelines

#### PURPOSE

This guideline reflects policy for evaluation, acquisition, and installation of approved Government-Furnished Appliances at GSA-Controlled workplace facilities, and it provides standards for Employee-Furnished or Organization Manager approved appliances in the workplace. This policy applies to all GSA-Controlled workplaces, including GSA-Controlled offices and GSA-Controlled facilities.

#### DEFINITION

- A. Appliance refers to any item** that requires an electrical connection or a power source for operation, including permanent fixtures and temporary devices, other than general electronics such as personal computers (PC's), monitors, printers, and related technology items.
- B. Government-Furnished Appliances** include large commodities such as refrigerators, microwaves, space heaters, coffee services, and personal appliances, such as fans, foot warmers, task lights, or special accommodations that are approved and installed through GSA or Agencies with delegated authority to perform buildings management functions.
- C. Employee-Furnished Appliances** are personally owned devices brought into the GSA-Controlled workplace by employees; such as coffee pots, cup warmers, warming plates, hot plates, fans, humidifiers, portable refrigerators, radios, lamps, clocks, decorator lights, fish tanks, water coolers, etc. **(Note: Not all appliances are acceptable for installation.)**

#### POLICY

- A. Appliance must always meet a Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory (NRTL), such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), safety certification.** Appliances must be suitably installed for the locations and service intended.
- B. Appliances purchased for use in Federal facilities** must conform to the objectives of *Executive Order 13123, June 8, 1999, Greening the Government Through Efficient Energy Management*. DOE Energy Star<sup>7</sup> environmental standards should be met, whenever possible.
- C. Installation of any concession** (i.e., a coffee service station) must comply with GSA requirements of the *Randolph Sheppard Regulations*, which affords licensed blind vendors a priority in the operation of vending facilities on Federal property."
- D. Organization Management/employee sponsored coffee services** may be authorized for common-area usage in designated areas or break rooms. Employee-furnished appliances must meet an NRTL or UL (Underwriter Laboratories) certification and Energy Star standards.

#### RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Federal Agencies**, upon approval of GSA, must provide concession services where building population supports such services and when the availability of existing commercial services is insufficient to meet Federal agency needs.
- B. GSA, Delegated Agencies, and their Safety Office(s)**, may require the removal of unauthorized Appliances, subject to these responsibilities and procedural guidelines.
- C. GSA is responsible for providing a safe physical environment** for all employees and for the review and oversight of approved Government-Furnished Appliances. GSA provides guidance regarding the appropriateness of any Appliance in question.



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- D. **GSA Building Managers** are responsible for monitoring Appliance installations at field sites.
- E. **Organization Managers** are responsible for reviewing requests for Government-Furnished Appliances and should submit a justification for their acquisition in writing to the GSA Building Manager. Organization Managers are also responsible to review and determine the appropriateness of any Employee-Furnished Appliance in the workplace, and they assume responsibility for safety compliance.
- F. **Safety Office(s) provide inspections**, if there is any doubt about the safety or feasibility of an Appliance.
- G. **Employees must acquire their Organization Manager's permission** in advance of installation for any Appliance they bring into the workplace. Employees who have unauthorized Appliances will be asked to remove them.

#### PROCEDURES

(Refer to the Table of Appliances- page 3)

- A. **Government-Furnished Appliances (Category 1)** GSA will evaluate requests for Government -Furnished Appliances on a case-by-case basis. Government furnished microwave ovens, refrigerators, or coffee services may be provided in designated refreshment areas. Appliances may be placed at locations, where employees work overtime or have irregular duty hours, and where nearby food facilities are closed during that time.

Government-Furnished Appliances may also include fans, foot warmers, leg warmers, space heaters, and task lights. Installation of these Appliances may be approved once other adjustments to the physical work environment have been reviewed by GSA. A request for the Appliance must be in support of the employee's physical well being. GSA Building Managers may evaluate the use of an Appliance after installation. Awareness of continued employee concerns or complaints may indicate other conditions, such as potential health issues that may need to be considered.

- B. **Acceptable Employee-Furnished Appliances (Category 2)** Organization Managers assume responsibility for any Appliance approved for use in the workplace. Small personal Appliances must comply with UL safety standards and must not pose potential disruptions to the workplace, such as interference with lighting or building power, noise pollution, and/or possible odors generated from stagnant water, lack of cleaning, etc. Appliances in this category may include radios, lamps, or clocks.

- C. **Employee-Furnished Appliances generally NOT acceptable for installation in the workplace (Category 3)**

Appliances in Category 3 of the attached table are not generally approved for installation. Items such as personal portable space heaters, coffee pots, electric coolers, grills, griddles, hot plates, small refrigerators, toaster ovens, fish tanks and water fountains may cause safety hazards, significant noise pollution, or potential water damage. Also included are LP gas heaters. This restriction is not applicable to appliances powered exclusively by batteries. Other restrictions may apply to the use of any type of electrical equipment in a given area, and must be followed, regardless of the power source. Cumulative use of these items may cause overload on certain building electrical systems and trigger outages. Any consideration of a Category 3 Appliance requires specific detailed justification and approval. ***Any exception based on medical reasons for placement of unauthorized Appliances must meet standard evaluation processes for reasonable accommodation.***



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#### TABLE OF APPLIANCES

<b>Category 1: Government-Furnished Appliances</b>	
<i>Items must be approved through GSA or Delegated Agency</i>	
Type of Appliance	General Criteria/Issues
<b>Coffee Services</b>	Government Furnished services must meet Randolph Sheppard criteria. (Supplies are not provided.) Employee-Furnished and approved services may include coffee pots installed in designated common areas or break rooms.
<b>Cozy Toes/Leg Warmers &amp; Fans</b>	Installed if GSA Hot/Cold inspections warrant. Issue based on case-by-case assessment. (External devices may interfere with HVAC balance and are not recommended due to high-energy demand.)
<b>Microwaves</b>	Approval based on employee access to local food services and space availability.
<b>Refrigerators</b>	Approval based on employee access to local food services and space availability.
<b>Space Heaters</b>	Installed if GSA Hot/Cold inspections warrant. Issue based on case-by-case assessment. (External devices may interfere with HVAC balance. Not recommended due to energy demand.)
<b>Task Lights</b>	Approved if workstation adjustments are inadequate to serve need.

Appliances must meet  
UL (Underwriters  
Laboratories)  
Certification, and  
Energy Star?  
Standards

<b>Category 2: Employee-Furnished Appliances</b>	
<i>Items must be approved through GSA or Delegated Agency</i>	
Type of Appliance	General Criteria/Issues
<b>Bar-B-Q Grills</b>	(May be acceptable for special/sponsored events.)
<b>Clocks</b>	
<b>Lamps</b>	
<b>Radios</b>	
<b>Other?</b>	Check with GSA Building Manager regarding any and all other electrical devices brought into the workplace.

Appliances must meet  
UL (Underwriters  
Laboratories)  
certification and basic  
safety standards

<b>Category 3: Appliances <u>Generally Not Approved</u> for Use in GSA Facilities</b>	
<b>Aquariums/Fish Tanks</b>	<b>Hot Plates</b>
<b>Coffee Pots</b> (Personal/ Individual use in employee workstation is not acceptable)	<b>Heaters</b> (Any device brought into the workplace by an employee. -- See Accepted Issue, Category 1.)
<b>Coolers and Small Refrigerators</b> (Any device brought into the workplace by an employee. -- See Accepted Issue, Category 1.)	<b>Pop-Corn Makers</b>
<b>Decorator Lights</b> (i.e. Holiday string lights)	<b>Toaster Ovens</b>
<b>Fans</b> (Any device brought into the workplace by an employee. -- See Accepted Issue, Category 1.)	<b>Water Fountains</b>
<b>Griddles</b>	<b>Other?</b> Check with GSA Building Manager regarding any and all other electrical devices brought into the workplace.



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##### Appendix 1 - General Safety Precautions

**A. In order to minimize the potential for electrical fires, since electrical fires are the leading cause of fires in the workplace. Only personal appliances that meet all of the following requirements shall be used:**

- (1) Good operational condition, with no loose electrical connections.
- (2) Powered by 110 volt AC line current.
- (3) Listed by an NRTL.
- (4) All electric heating devices must have:
  - ? A functional **thermostat** that allows you to fine-tune the average power to maintain the desired temperature: it'll switch the heater off once a certain temperature is reached and switch it on again when the temperature falls.
  - ? A **tilt switch**; switches the heater off if it's tipped over.
  - ? A **thermal cut-out switch**; prevents the heater from overheating — for example, if the thermostat fails.
  - ? **Weight / number of wheels**; One advantage of most types of electric heaters is their portability. However, some convection and oil-filled column heaters are rather heavy, so look for wheels (four are easier than two).
  - ? And should have a **timer**; useful to switch the heater on and off automatically.

##### **B. Personal appliances shall not be used in:**

- (1) Areas where flammable materials are stored or used, or where combustibles are stored, unless approved by a GSA Building Manager.
- (2) Wet or damp locations unless they are designed for such locations.

##### **C. While in use:**

- (1) Personal Appliances should be observed for proper operation, including signs of overheating or any other malfunction. Personal appliances exhibiting signs of overheating or other malfunction shall be removed from service and/or repaired.
- (2) Personal appliances shall be turned off and/or unplugged overnight or when otherwise not attended for a significant amount of time.
- (3) Personal appliances shall not produce distracting noise, odor, or otherwise adversely affect others in the workplace.
- (4) Cords must be situated to prevent tripping and not be susceptible to being crushed, cut, pinched, or otherwise damaged by traffic through the area.
- (5) Personal appliances shall not be handled or suspended by their cords.
- (6) To avoid damage or overheating of the personal appliance cords, they shall not be covered in any part with carpet, throw rugs, newspapers, office furniture, etc.
- (7) If the cord of an appliance crosses an aisle or walkway, it shall have a cord protection strip attached to the cord.
- (8) Extension cords shall not be used with personal appliances unless such use is approved by the GSA Building Manager and the extension cord used with the appliance is protected to the same specifications as the appliance cord.
- (9) The extension cord is listed by an NRTL (see AttachmentE1) or constructed by a qualified electrician utilizing UL-listed components.



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(10) Personal appliances that do not meet the criteria set forth in this guideline or are not being used as required by this guideline, and are not exempted by a Special Work Permit, shall be removed from service immediately.

#### **Appendix 2 - Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratories (NRTL).**

Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratories (NRTL). The following laboratory organizations have been accredited by OSHA to certify certain specified products or categories of products for use in the workplace:

A. Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. (UL), 333 Pfingsten Road, Northbrook, Illinois 60062, (708) 272-8800  
B. Factory Mutual Research Corporation (FMRC), 1151 Boston-Providence Turnpike, P.O. Box 9102, Norwood, Massachusetts 02062, (617) 762-4300

C. MET Electrical Testing Company, Inc. (MET), Laboratory Division, 916 West Patapsco Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21230, 1-800-638-6057; (301) 354-2200

D. Dash, Straus and Goodhue, Inc. (DSG), 593 Massachusetts Avenue, Boxborough, Massachusetts 01719, (508) 263-2662

E. ETL Testing Laboratories, Inc. (ETL), Cortland Safety Division Industrial Park, Cortland, New York 13045, 1-800-345-3851; (607) 753-6711

F. American Gas Association Laboratories (AGA), 8501 East Pleasant Valley Road, Cleveland, Ohio 44131, (216) 524-4990

G. Communication Certification Laboratory (CCL), 1940 West Alexander Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84119, (801) 972-6146

H. SGS United States Testing Company, Inc. (USTC), California Division, Los Angeles, California, (323) 838-1600

I. Canadian Standards Association (CSA), 178 Rexdale Blvd., Toronto, Ontario, M9W 1R3, Canada, (416) 747-4000